

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-5, 7-11 and 13 have been cancelled without prejudice, and claims 12 and 21 have been amended. No new matter has been added by virtue of the amendments. For instance, support for the amendments appears in the original claims of the application.

Applicants respond as follows to outstanding issues.

Claim 18 was objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim.

The objection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 12 calls for a polymer that is at least substantially free of aromatic group. Claim 18 recites that the polymer is completely free of aromatic groups. Thus, claim 18 further limits claim 12 and is considered proper. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection is requested.

Claims 1, 3-5 and 7-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. As grounds for the rejection, it is stated that the term "substantially free" is unclear.

Attention is directed to page 9, lines 1-7 of the application, which makes the meaning of the noted claim language clear. In view thereof, withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Claims 1, 3-5, 9, 11-12, 18-19 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 over Tanabe (EP843220).

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7-12 and 17-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 over Sumitomo (EP856773).

Claims 1, 3-5 and 7-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 over Ohsawa (U.S. Patent 5,847,218) or Watanabe (U.S. Patent 5,876,900) and further in view of Hada (U.S. Patent 5,929,271).

The pending claims recite features of claim 13, which was not rejected only under Section 103.

Independent claim 12 calls for a photoresist that comprises a non-aromatic amine compound that comprises a tertiary nitrogen alicyclic ring member. Applicants have found that such "hindered amines" can be particularly effective. See the application at page 7, lines 17-19.

It is not seen that the cited documents disclose or otherwise suggest such a photoresist composition. In the Office Action, no disclosure is cited for a use of a hindered amine as recited in the pending claims

Moreover, it is specifically acknowledged in the Office Action that the Ohsawa and Watanabe documents do not suggest a photoresist composition that contains a resin that is substantially free of aromatic groups. It is also acknowledged in the Office Action that the Hada document does not disclose use of any type of amine additive.

Clearly, no suggestion would have existed to make the combination proposed by the instant rejection.

Hada – the only document relied on for a disclosure of a polymer without aromatic groups – nowhere reports an amine additive of any type.

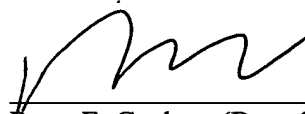
The Oshawa and Watanabe documents do not describe such polymers.

The skilled worker simply would not have had any incentive to import a single component of the Hada system (i.e. the polymer) into the composition of Oshawa or Watanabe, which does not describe such polymers.

In view thereof, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are requested.

It is believed the application is in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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MARKED VERSION TO SHOW CHANGES

12. (twice amended) A photoresist composition comprising a resin binder that comprises a polymer that contains pendant photoacid labile moieties and is substantially free of any aromatic groups, a photoacid generator and a non-aromatic amine compound that comprises [either 1)] a tertiary nitrogen alicyclic ring member[; or 2) a tertiary nitrogen that is not a ring member, and is substituted by at least two secondary or tertiary carbon radicals].

21. (amended) An article of manufacture comprising a microelectronic wafer or flat panel display substrate having coated thereon a layer of the photoresist composition of claim [11] 12.